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Communicator

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What To Do for Your Garden and Lawn in April

by Susan Harris

April is a great month to begin to create the beautiful lawn and garden you'll love to see in the summer. GHI's Yard Solutions Task Force has some tips for getting your garden going in April.

First, remove last year's stalks and dead leaves in borders, beds and around trees and shrubs. Dig up the weeds and apply 2-3 inches of mulch to all bare ground. That will hold moisture, prevent weeds and moderate soil temperatures.

After the flowers on your spring-blooming shrubs have faded, prune them if they need it – and we bet they do – to encourage new growth at the base and therefore a fuller shape or to reduce the overall size if needed.

Lawns need at least one yearly feeding. If yours looks healthy in the spring, do your feeding in the fall. Troubled lawns need help in the spring as well as in the fall, and April is a good time to fertilize, repair patches or overseed the whole lawn to thicken it up. GHI sells small bags of grass seed for only \$2; stop by the Administration building to pick some up.

Now is the perfect time, when the garden centers are full and before it gets



The newly created island near 5 Court Ridge is a beautiful addition to the lawn area. Photo credit: Susan Harris

hot, to make your yard more of a garden by adding small trees, shrubs and perennials. But don't plant them just anywhere - create new curvy borders for them, or islands around existing trees or shrubs, with a nice sharp edge between the border and your lawn if you have one. Visit <http://www.ghi.coop/content/v-plantings-hedges-trees-etc> for a list of recommend plants and problem trees.

Lastly, be a neighborhood do-gooder and clear the plant debris from inner sidewalks near you. Safety first!

For excellent instruction in planting, pruning and lawn care, go to www.goodgardeningvideos.org/guides. The videos there were selected for accuracy and quality by a pro-science nonprofit. While you're on the website, browse the videos about plants for suggestions and the video tours of private gardens for inspiration.

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Help Decide GHI's Direction

By Tom Jones, Chair, Nominations & Elections Committee

This is a challenging time. Civility and cooperation nationwide are under stress, societal changes are underway, and the federal government is experiencing unprecedented turbulence. But here in Greenbelt, we are essentially the same community as last year and GHI is the same cooperative of neighbors. While voter turnout surges in years with presidential elections, votes at the local level can have far greater impact on our daily lives.

Do you talk to your neighbors? If so, you probably talk about GHI. Perhaps about new doors, windows, and heating from the Homes Improvement Program? Or perhaps you discuss parking, yards, pets, monthly costs, or sheds? Perhaps you've heard questions about how GHI operates, what GHI does, and what's coming for GHI homes?

Well, the good news is that GHI isn't "they"; GHI is "us". You, me, and our neighbors bear 100% responsibility—and authority—for what GHI does. GHI is our 1,600 members, our homes, our land, and the people we hire to maintain them for us. GHI is not a faraway, cold-hearted manager; GHI is in your court and at your dinner table.

Every May, GHI members gather to decide what direction will GHI take. Missing these annual meetings means your voice is lost in deciding that direction. When discussing important matters, the words of one wise individual can have a huge impact on the outcome. Sometimes votes are so close that they have to be counted by hand.

One of the most important parts of an annual meeting is the election: candidates come forward, present their views, and the membership selects who will represent us. For two days each May, this is the most local of elections. A single vote can determine who represents us on the Board of Directors for two years. We also vote for the Audit Committee and the Nominations & Elections (N&E) Committee.

With May coming up rapidly, put the annual meeting on your calendar: Thursday, May 11. There's also a Candidates' Forum on Tuesday, May 2. If you have ideas and an open mind, you should consider running for office. If you might be interested, get a Candidate Packet from <http://ghi.coop/election> or the GHI lobby on Hamilton Place—it's free and easy. There's also an informal GHI Social at the New Deal Café on Wednesday, April 12 if you are interested in learning more about serving. If you have questions, please email ghi.NominationsAndElections@gmail.com or call N&E Chair Tom Jones at 301-474-6001.

Update to the Member's Handbook

Section **X.D. Construction Specifications** of the Handbook was updated: Please replace the following section:

Starting with pages 58-16 thru 62a-09 replace with the revised pages 58-16/59-17 thru 62-17/62a-09.

WHAT'S HAPPENING

Unless otherwise noted, meetings are held at the GHI Administration Offices on Hamilton Place, and are open to all GHI members. Dates are subject to change.

April		
1	11:00 am	Pre Purchase Orientation
2	2:00 pm	Woodlands Plant Swap
3	11:00 am	Storm Water Management Task Force
3	7:00 pm	Nominations and Elections Committee
4	7:00 pm	Audit Committee
4	7:30 pm	Task Force on Solar for Administration Bldg.
5	7:00 pm	Addition Maintenance Program Task Force
6	7:30 pm	Board Meeting
7	--	OFFICE CLOSED
11	7:30 pm	Legislative and Government Affairs Cmte
12	7:30 pm	Architectural Review Committee
17	7:00 pm	Nominations and Elections Committee
18	7:00 pm	Pre-Purchase Orientation
18	7:30 pm	Companion Animal Committee
19	7:00 pm	Woodlands Committee
20	7:30 pm	Board Meeting
21	--	OFFICE CLOSED
24	7:00 pm	Communications Committee
25	7:00 pm	Audit Committee
26	7:00 pm	Buildings Committee
26	7:00 pm	Homes Improvement Program Financing w/ Greenbelt Federal Credit Union
27	7:00 pm	Finance Committee

Call 301-474-6011 for emergency maintenance outside of normal hours or when GHI is closed.

Member Announcements

Responses to Questions Asked During the Town Hall Meeting Available Online

On January 29, the Board and staff held a town hall meeting to give members an update on current plans and concerns on topics that included the Homes improvement Program, plans for removing asbestos from crawlspaces of masonry homes, the 2017 budget, and other initiatives. Responses to questions that members asked at the town hall meeting have been posted at <http://bit.ly/2miRlrP>.

Volunteers Needed for Committees

Many of our committees are short on volunteers right now. With 1,600 homes and even more member-owners, having enough volunteers should never be a problem for our co-op. Make 2017 the year you give an hour a month to YOUR co-op. GHI committees study specific problems referred by the Board and advise the Board by providing suggested solutions. Committees and Taskforces usually only meet once a month and these meetings are open to all. These committees are most in need of volunteers currently: Communications, Finance, Investment and Member Outreach. Email Maesha McNeill at mmcneill@ghi.coop or call (301) 474-4161 x128 for more information.